

PLENARY ADDRESS

HARRY WILSON

Harry Wilson is an associate commissioner for the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He is charged with leading the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB). The bureau provides national leadership on youth issues and assistance to help community-based organizations provide effective, comprehensive services for youth in at-risk situations. Annually, the bureau serves over 630,000 homeless youth and their families in over 700 programs. The bureau is the lead for an agency-wide, crosscutting initiative on positive youth development and also serves on the Interagency Council on Homelessness.

FYSB is also the lead division for the Health and Human Services component of the President's Mentoring Initiative. The bureau has oversight responsibilities for faith-based and community-based programs that provide mentoring services for children of prisoners.

FYSB also administers family violence prevention services through state formula grants and a network of quality assistance providers serving women and children who experience domestic violence with 2,200 shelters across the nation.

As one of the Bush administration's leaders in positive youth development, Wilson has taken his lifelong experience of working with and advocating for youth (and also as an urban faith-based youth leader) and promoted youth empowerment and engagement strategies across the federal government.

Wilson is one of a growing number of advocates in Washington who believe that youth should be celebrated for their assets and competencies rather than viewed as a set of problems to be solved.